

Brookline Preservation Commission

Demolition Application Report

Address: 85 Naples Road
Applicant: Naples Street Development LLC
Building Type: House (Full)
National Register Listing (if Applicable): None



Historical/Architectural Significance:

The home at 85 Naples Road was built by D.H. McKay in 1897, designed by architect Samuel J. Brown. In the 1900 Town of Brookline Atlas, Willard G. Nash of Somerville is listed as the owner of the house, along with neighboring 89 Naples Road and 95 Naples Road, which formerly occupied the lot on the corner of Gibbs and Naples. Nash also owned other properties nearby on Gibbs and Thorndike Streets, which he purchased from McKay's widow after McKay's death in 1898, and rented for income.

The Beals-Stedman-Naples Area is a neighborhood of middle class housing in North Brookline that was rapidly built after the arrival of streetcars in the late 19th century. This area was the north portion of Babcock Farm, sold in 1895 as an undeveloped parcel to David McKay, who quickly laid out the largest subdivision in North Brookline encompassing Naples Road and Fuller, Coolidge and Thorndike Streets, on both sides of Harvard Street. McKay is responsible for 32 of the houses on Naples Road; 17 were built by others. The portion of Naples Road in the Beals-Stedman-Naples Area is distinguished by the generosity of its road width, lot and house sizes.

Architect Samuel Brown (1853-1926) was one of the architects used frequently by McKay in his developments. Brown designed 16 houses for McKay, 13 of them located on Naples Road. Brown was born in Cincinnati, he moved to Boston at age 18 to enter MIT's school of Architecture. After graduation he worked for the firm Ware & Van Brunt, led by his MIT professor William R. Ware. He subsequently worked for the firm Cummings & Sears and served as the City Architect of Boston before starting his own private practice designing primarily large residential homes. Perhaps his most famous work was the Beleden at 50 Bellevue Ave in Bristol Connecticut, designed for William Sessions in 1908.

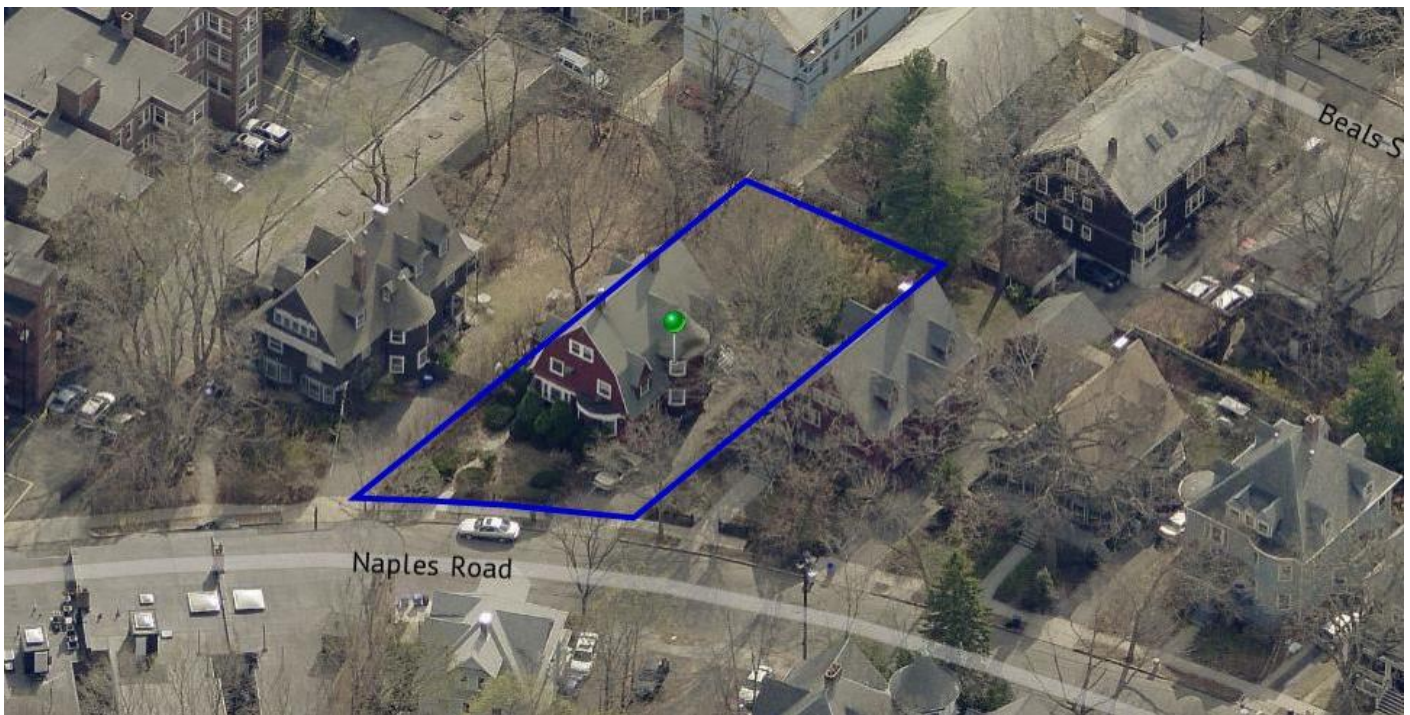
The eclectic, 2 ½ story gambrel roofed home contains a somewhat unusual mix of Queen Anne and Shingle Style design elements. The gambrel roof that defines the massing of the main body of the house flares slightly as it meets the first floor, transitioning with a narrow, curved band of shingles to a single story flat-roofed curved bay on the right side of the façade. To the left of this bay, a large 15 light window is framed by leaded glass sidelights. The right elevation features a 2 story bay with conical roof at the center, flanked by a gabled dormer on each side. Originally, a porch wrapped the left corner of the home, which may have helped to balance the composition of the facade. Brown was known for such unusual compositions, executed with varying degrees of success. The tower appears to be a signature feature of his designs, present at 89 & 173 Naples Road, 1533 Beacon Street, 147 Thorndike Street, and 31-33 Winthrop Road.

Originally a single family, the home was converted into a 2-family in 1952 by owner Lillian Snyder. The conversion involved the addition of a new rear stair to provide egress and the alteration of what may have been the original entrance location on the left side of the building. In 1965 what remained of the original covered porch was removed, replaced by the open 4'x 6' deck at the left entrance. Many windows in the home have been changed over the years, though no permits could be located for this work. The remaining original windows are in poor condition and covered with storm windows.

The house at 85 Naples Road meets the following criteria for an initial determination of significance:

- c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the town or Commonwealth; and
- d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or builder, either by itself or as part of a group of buildings.

The building at 85 Naples Road retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, and workmanship.



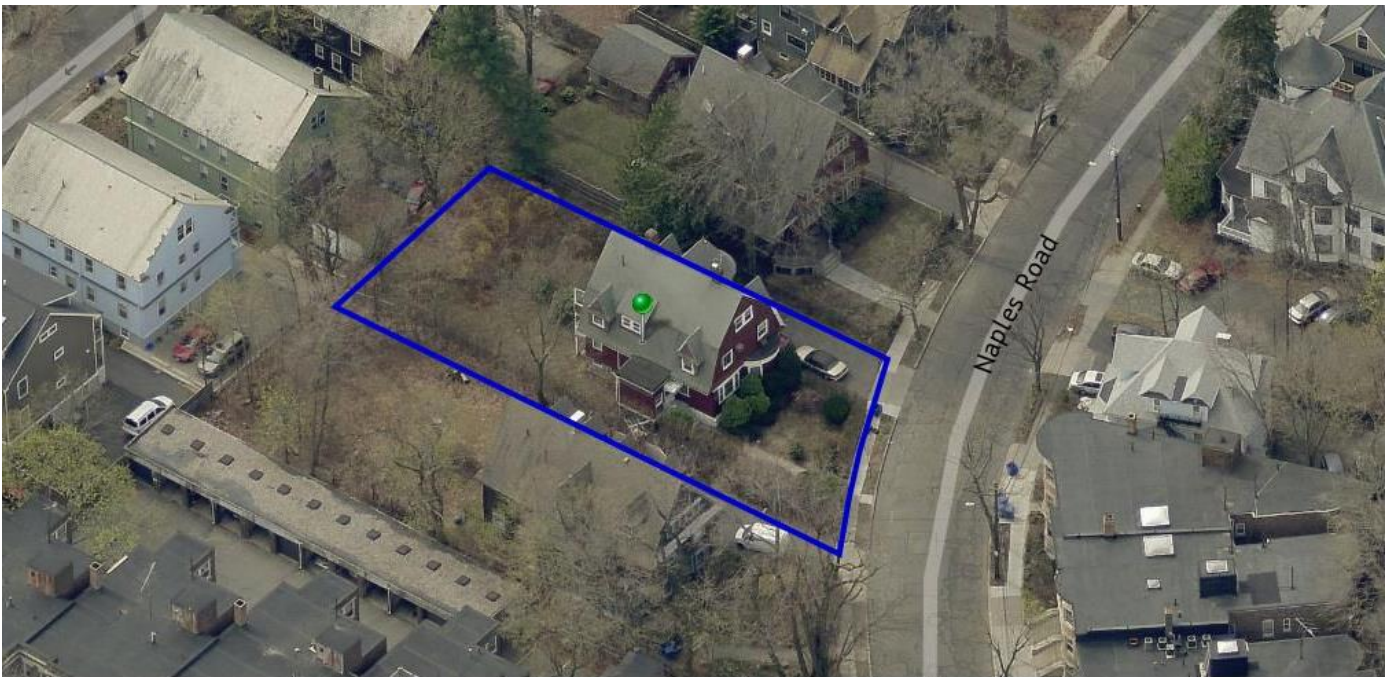
Aerial view of 85 Naples Road, looking east.



Aerial view of 85 Naples Road, looking north.



Aerial view of 85 Naples Road, looking west.



Aerial view of 85 Naples Road, looking south.



Entrance to left of house



85 Naples Road, façade (top) and right elevation (bottom), views from Naples Road



85 Naples Road - Back





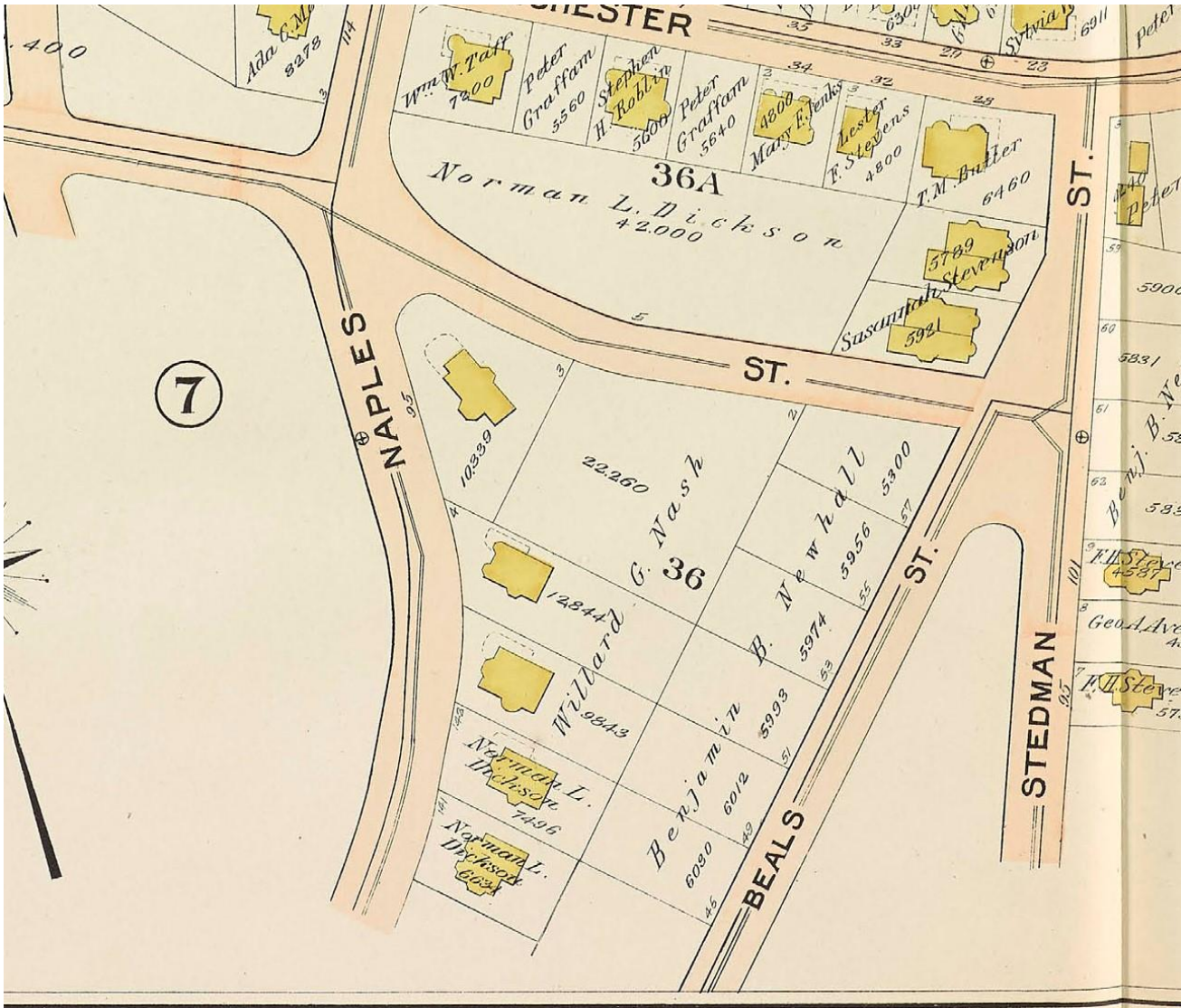
85 Naples Road - Left Side (back)



A single original sash, 12 light curved construction in the front single story bay



Leaded glass windows, left of façade.



1900 Town of Brookline Atlas, showing 85 Naples owned by Willard G Nash, along with neighbors 89 & 95 Naples Road